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117

FACSIMILE
OF THE
WASHINGTON MANUSCRIPT OF THE GOSPELS
IN THE FREER COLLECTION

EDITION OF 435 COPIES

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FACSIMILE
OF THE
WASHINGTON MANUSCRIPT
OF
THE FOUR GOSPELS
IN THE FREER COLLECTION

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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Ann Arbor, Michigan
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

1912
Freer Collection
Washington

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INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

THE manuscript of the Four Gospels, of which a facsimile is here presented, is now in the private collection of Mr. Charles L. Freer of Detroit, Michigan, through whose liberality the present publication has been made possible. It will eventually be transferred to the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D. C., where it will be placed with the other collections in the Gallery to be erected by Mr. Freer.

An extended introduction is rendered unnecessary by the simultaneous publication of a companion volume* containing a full discussion and collation of the manuscript. The photographing was done by Mr. George R. Swain, of Lockport, Illinois; and the facsimiles were made by the photo-gelatine process of the Heliotype Company (W. C. Ramsay), of Boston. A full description of the process can be found in the Introduction to the Facsimile Edition of the Washington Manuscript of Deuteronomy and Joshua. The pages of this facsimile are entirely free from retouching.† In general it is clearer and easier to read than the manuscript itself, though the fact, that in separating the leaves the ink sometimes adhered to the opposite page, has made a few places indistinct.

The facsimiles of the covers are treated in a separate section by Professor Charles R. Morey, of Princeton University.

The same scribe wrote the whole manuscript except the first sixteen pages of John, which seem to be earlier. The main part of the manuscript was written in the Fourth Century, in Egypt. The text differs so decidedly in the various parts, that we may infer that the parent or some near ancestor was made up from parts of different manuscripts. It has been possible to differentiate seven or eight different parts. The manuscript is quite free from later corrections, though changes by the original scribe and by the *διορθωτής* are not infrequent. Many of these changes involve variants from

*University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series, Vol. IX, Part I.

†On p. 17, above l. 22, there was a slight injury to the plate, which gave a strange form to the letter ϕ . On p. 327, l. 13, sand obscured the tenth letter, μ .

different families of manuscripts, which seem to show that the parent manuscript had been corrected to agree with a later recension.

The parchment is mostly sheepskin and is badly yellowed with age. Leaves of goatskin occur but are not easily distinguished; they are somewhat whiter and the characteristic branching veins can sometimes be seen. The first quire of John seems to be all of sheepskin. The quires contain regularly sixteen pages each; there are four twelve-page quires, besides those which are defective or which come at the ends of the several Gospels. The facsimile reproduces the manuscript arrangement of the quires. The pages average eight and three-sixteenths inches in height by five and one-half in width (209 mm. by 138 mm.). The parchment averages about .13 mm. thick, the goatskin being regularly somewhat thinner than the sheepskin. The writing is in one column of thirty lines to the page. The ruling is regular for every line with perpendiculars at the ends of the lines.

The following abbreviations are used: $\overline{\Theta\text{C}}$ = *θεός*; $\overline{\text{K}\text{C}}$ = *κύριος*; $\overline{\text{X}\text{C}}$ ($\overline{\text{XPC}}$ rare) = *Χρίστος*; $\overline{\text{I}\text{C}}$ = *Ἰησοῦς*; $\overline{\text{I}\text{N}\text{A}}$ = *πνεῦμα*; $\overline{\text{A}\text{N}\text{O}\text{C}}$ = *ἄνθρωπος*; $\overline{\text{I}\text{H}\text{P}}$ = *πατήρ*; $\overline{\text{M}\text{H}\text{P}}$ = *μήτηρ*; $\overline{\text{T}\text{C}}$ = *νιός* (rare); $\overline{\Delta\text{A}\Delta}$ ($\overline{\Delta\Delta}$ once) = *Δαυείδ*; $\overline{\text{I}\text{H}\Lambda}$ ($\overline{\text{ICP}\Lambda}$ once) = *Ἰσραήλ*. The oblique cases of these words generally show like abbreviations. Plurals are less regularly abbreviated. In John, quire 1, occur also $\overline{\text{C}\text{H}\text{P}}$ = *σωτήρ*; $\overline{\text{O}\text{T}\text{P}\text{O}\text{N}}$ = *οὐρανόν*; $\overline{\text{O}\text{T}\text{P}\text{O}\text{T}}$ = *οὐρανοῦ*; $\overline{\text{B}\text{A}\text{E}\text{I}\text{A}\text{N}}$ = *βασιλείαν*; $\overline{\text{B}\text{A}\text{E}\text{T}\text{C}}$ = *βασιλεύς*. Chiefly at the ends of lines ξ , θ , τ , η rarely occur; combinations like $\text{N}\tau$ = *νην*, $\lambda\text{I}\tau$, and μI , appear once or twice each. At the ends of lines ν final or medial is often shown by a mark over the preceding vowel. Letters at the ends of lines are very seldom written smaller, even if crowded.

A single dot may appear over υ and two dots over τ when initial or when separated from a preceding vowel in pronunciation. In the first quire of John there occurs a curved stroke over some initial vowels. Rough breathings in the form L or t are found very rarely. There are no accents. An apostrophe (') often occurs after words (especially proper nouns) ending in any consonant except ν or s ; it also sometimes marks the elision of a final vowel. Old Testament quotations are often indicated by small angular marks (ξ) in the left-hand margin.

Paragraphs, usually shown by slightly enlarged letters projecting into the margin, occur rather frequently. In a few instances paragraph marks (— or rarely \int) are found at the ends of paragraphs. Paragraphs are most numerous in Luke and Matthew; they are rare in Mark.

Punctuation, corresponding approximately to the ancient *ρήματα* or *στίχοι*, is regularly shown by slight spacings. The single dot in middle position is not infrequent; rarely the double dot (:), or the line filler (>) occurs. In the first quire of John the single dot

in middle position is used regularly and the divisions are more numerous. There are no lectionary marks.

The color of the ink is dark brown, and has been reproduced as closely as possible in the facsimile. The second and third hands are regularly lighter. There are one or two examples of black ink by a later hand.

At the end of Mark (p. 372) occurs the following subscription in Fifth Century semi-cursive hands:

✠ χριστε αγιε συ μετα του δουλο(υ σου τιμοθεου ✠)
και παντων των αυτου ✠.

The first hand of the subscription wrote only the first line. The second made some change in the name and added the second line. The portion in parentheses is in black ink by a third hand.

On the top margin of this page there is a crude note which seems to read ..λλος ναως or ..λλου ναως.

There are two lacunae in the manuscript, John xiv. 25 to xvi. 7 (covering two leaves between pp. 172 and 173) and Mark xv. 12 to 38 (one leaf between pp. 368 and 369).

THE PAINTED COVERS OF THE MANUSCRIPT*

The covers of the Freer Gospels are two wooden panels; of these one, the paintings of which are badly worn, formed the left-hand board, the other the right-hand board. The latter measures $5\frac{5}{8}$ inches \times $8\frac{3}{8}$ inches. The left-hand board is not quite rectangular, its width varying from $5\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{5}{8}$ inches and its length from $8\frac{1}{4}$ to $8\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Both covers are bevelled on both the outer and the inner faces at the top and bottom, and also on the sides in the case of the outer faces. The thickness varies from $\frac{3}{8}$ inch to $\frac{5}{8}$ inch.

The covers are now separated from the manuscript, to obviate possible damage to the text. The back binding is still preserved and consists of a leather backing applied over interlacing cords of the same material. The ends of these cords were inserted in twenty-six holes on the side of each cover, and fragments of them still remain in place. The protruding ends of the cords were bound by a strip of cloth, about one inch wide, pasted along the inner face of each cover. Over this is pasted a parchment backing, which covers the whole inner face of each leaf.

The function of the twenty-six holes in the back edge of each board is thus explained by the method of binding. It is not so easy to see what use was made of the two rows of seven holes each which are found along the opposite or right-hand edge of the left-hand cover. One row runs along the upper part of the cover's edge, the second along the lower portion, leaving a space of slightly less than three inches between the two rows.

* The covers are shown in Plates, before p. 1 and after p. 372.

On the upper edge of the same cover is a row of ten holes. The right-hand cover has no such holes in its edges, save one in the upper outer corner — the upper left-hand corner in the plate — which corresponds to one in the upper right-hand corner of the left-hand cover. Cords were evidently inserted in these two holes, as the one in the left-hand cover has still a fragment of a wooden peg remaining in it. The cords in these corner holes may have been used to tie the covers together when the book was closed. The rows of holes in the edges of the left-hand cover are not repeated in the other cover, and it therefore seems likely that they were used for the attachment of flaps or the like by which to lift the left-hand cover, thereby avoiding contact with the paintings. It is possible, however, that the holes have to do with the attachment of a casing of cloth or leather which was folded around the book.

The covers are provided with metal chains attached by staples, one to the upper right-hand corner of the left-hand cover, the other to the upper left-hand corner of the right-hand cover. The chain attached to the left-hand cover measures a little over six inches, the other a little less than seven. These chains were probably meant to keep the book from opening to its full extent, so that the paintings of the covers would not be abraded by resting flat upon the reading desk. It is of course to be supposed that they are later additions to the book, though it is worth noting that one of the staples has cracked the wood of the cover, and that the crack is weathered.

The covers were painted after the book was bound, as is demonstrated by the irregular traces of yellow paint remaining around the holes of the back binding and on the fragments of leather cords, and also by the way in which the same color has invaded the space between the holes of the binding cords, but stops short at the line of the binding itself.

The painter of our covers used no priming and has left no traces of his preliminary outline. If he used one, the green filling of the background was put in after the preliminary outline, and in any case after the figures were drawn, for the brush-strokes of this green filling are guided by the contours of the figures. The coarse and irregular brush-strokes indicate a crude brush, doubtless a reed-brush of the sort described by Gayet in his description of the process of Coptic painting.* The figures are painted in masses of ground-color, and all the details of features, drapery, etc., including hair and the black outlines of the figures, are overlaid upon this. The flesh-tints are ivory-white, with details in black, red, and white. The painting originally covered the entire panel, the border being yellow overlaid with a crude leaf-design in green and greenish-brown. But the yellow is the poorest material in the palette of the artist and has peeled badly, particularly around the edges. Here it must have disappeared early, leaving a strip of bare wood which has weathered, and gives the effect of a border in places, especially on the left-hand cover.

* *L'Art Copte*, p. 263.

The detail colors are all very thickly laid on, and the same is true in a less degree of the ground-colors. The green background shades almost into black in consequence of the thick painting, and this is especially true of the centre of each panel, where the upward and downward brush-strokes have mingled to form a very thick layer of paint.

The Evangelists are depicted in the order in which their gospels appear in the text: Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark. The last-named is labelled by the inscription placed vertically beside his figure: ⲬⲘⲀⲢⲔⲐⲐⲐ, and to the left of Luke may be detected the last two letters of his name: ⲀⲘ. The color-scheme, drapery, and attitude of the figure of John must have been, as the remaining fragments show, practically identical with that of Mark. The traces of color in his hair show also that he was white-haired, or gray-haired, like Mark.

We have, then, in these two panels definite portraits of the four Evangelists that should be of value to the student of Coptic iconography. This is particularly true of the figure of Mark, whose current type in Byzantine art is that of a man in the prime of life with black hair and a full, round beard. Strzygowski* recognized the existence of the "Paul-type" of Mark in Coptic art — gray hair, head slightly bald, pointed beard — but our portrait is the first published monument to confirm his statement, and to establish definitely the Coptic type of the Evangelist.

The questions relating to the date and style of these paintings will be taken up in detail in an article which the writer has in preparation on these and other mediaeval paintings in the collection of Mr. Freer, but a tentative judgment may be recorded here. Professor Sanders informs me that the manuscript shows evidence of rebinding. There are, for example, two cases of the sewing-in of half-leaves where the opposite half has been torn out and is lost. In one case a half-leaf has been torn out and pasted back in the MS. All these cases demonstrate that the manuscript was apart at the time, for the ends of the leaves, and the sewing as well, were concealed in the binding. The manuscript must therefore have been rebound, and its worn condition, betokening long use, points to more than one rebinding. It is likely, therefore, that the paintings are considerably subsequent in date to the text.

As to the indications of date furnished by the style of the paintings themselves, it must be remembered that Coptic monuments are notoriously difficult to place chronologically. The closest parallel to our paintings to which a reasonably certain date can be assigned is the fresco representing the Madonna flanked by two rows of saints in the east apse of Chapel XVII at Bawit. Clédat, arguing from the dates which he found in the graffiti scratched on some of the paintings of this chapel, decided that the frescoes could be no later than the Eighth Century "ou même VIIe". † Elsewhere ‡, he says that the paintings of Chapel

* *Orient oder Rom*, p. 73.

† *Mém. de l'Institut franç. d'arch. orientale*, XII, 2, p. 83.

‡ In Cabrol's *Dict. d'arch. chrét. et de la liturgie*, s.v. *Baouît*.

XVII seem to belong to the Sixth Century. Our paintings show a rough resemblance to the fresco of Bawit above mentioned, particularly in the angular beard of Luke, in the treatment of drapery, in postures, and in the drawing of feet. The technique of the Bawit fresco, however, is distinctly superior to that of our painted covers. The crudeness of the latter, and certain signs of decadence — notably the clinging drapery in the figure of Mark — incline me to place the paintings tentatively at a period later than that of the Bawit fresco, viz. the Seventh or Eighth Century. They are certainly pre-iconoclastic.

The facsimile plates of the covers were made by M. L. Piazza (H. Piazza & Cie., Paris, France). The photo-gelatine process with three colors, red, blue, and yellow, was used.



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ΕΜΕ ΠΕΦΙΛΗΚΑΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΠΕΠΙΣΤΕΥΚΑΤΕ
 ΟΤΙ ΕΓΩ ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΥ ΘΥ ΕΞ ΗΛΘΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΝ ΗΛΥ
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 ΔΕΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΝΙΑ ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΤΗ ΕΝΙ ΧΑΙ
 ΕΓΩ ΕΕΔΟΞΑ ΣΑ ΕΠΙ ΤΗ ΤΗ ΤΗ ΤΟ ΕΡΓΟΝ

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